

Fort Lee HISTORY

For at least three hundred years, the area of Virginia now called Fort Lee has been inhabited.

The roads and the later railroads on which tobacco was transported to market became the avenue of mobilization and troop support during the American Revolution and the Civil War.

These roads passing through Fort Lee linked Petersburg and City Point (Hopewell), both vital supply and communication centers on the Appomattox River.

During the last days of the Revolutionary War, British and Tory troops were engaged in a battle by a small force of Americans near Blandford Church, between Petersburg and the present Fort Lee.

After the Americans were forced to withdraw and all military stores in Petersburg were destroyed, Lord Cornwallis and his army joined the British and marched through this area to Yorktown where the war ended.

In the summer of 1864, General Grant decided the capture of Petersburg was essential to the Union cause in order to cut the important supply lines into Richmond and force General Lee out into the open.

General Lee moved his headquarters to "Violet Bank," now Colonial Heights, and Grant's headquarters and supply depot were at City Point. The struggle for Petersburg continued for ten months before Lee evacuated to the city.

One week later, Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House, 100 miles to the west.

Four historical markers indicate where General Grant's military railroad crossed the post.

For a time General Meade had his headquarters in the area of E Ave. and 38th St., and President Lincoln watched a review of troops at the present Mahone Ave. parade ground just weeks before his assassination.

First Camp Lee

Just 18 days after a state of war with Germany was declared, the first Camp Lee was selected as a state mobilization camp and later became a division training camp.

In June 1917, building began and within sixty days, 14,000 men swarmed over the newly designed military installation.

When construction work ended, there were accommodations for 60,335 men. On July 15, 1917, the War Department announced that the camp would be named in honor of General Robert E. Lee (1807-1870), the most famous of the Confederate Civil War commanders.

After World War I, Camp Lee was taken over by the Commonwealth of Virginia and designated a game preserve. Later, portions of the land were incorporated into the National Military Park of Petersburg.

Second Camp Lee

In October 1940, the War Department ordered the construction of another Camp Lee on the site of the earlier installation. Built as rapidly as the first, construction was still ongoing when the Quartermaster Replacement Training Center started operation in February 1941.

Camp Lee was also the home of a Medical Replacement Training Center, but as the Quartermaster training increased, it was decided to relocate the MRTC at Camp Pickett.

Later, the QMRTC was redesignated as an Army Services Forces Training Center, but it retained its basic mission of training Quartermaster personnel.

While the QMRTC was getting underway, the Quartermaster School was transferred to Camp Lee. A full program of courses was conducted, including Officer Candidate School. By the end of 1941, Camp Lee was the center of both basic and advanced training of Quartermaster personnel and held this position throughout the war.

Fort Lee

When World War II ended, the fate of Camp Lee was in question. In 1946, the War Department announced that Camp Lee would be retained as a center for Quartermaster training. Official recognition of its permanent status was obtained in 1950 and the post was redesignated as Fort Lee.

Immediately troops began Quartermaster training for the Korean War and continued for the next three years. After the Korean War, progress was made on an ambitious permanent building program.

Under the twenty year program, Fort Lee changed from an installation of temporary wooden structures to a modern Army post with permanent brick and cinder block buildings.

The Quartermaster Training Center, created to supervise the training of Quartermaster personnel and troop units, brought an intensification of training activity within the Quartermaster Corps. As a result, the courses formerly taught at other locations were incorporated in the curriculum of the Quartermaster School.

Profound changes were evident at Fort Lee during 1962. The post became a Class 1 military installation under Second United States Army. The Quartermaster School became a part of the Continental Army Command service school system and was also selected to serve as the home of the Quartermaster Corps and Corps Historian.

In July 1973, Fort Lee came under the control of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.